

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0017] with the following amended paragraph (twice amended):

[0017] Surrounding the metal insert member 36 is a sleeve 38 as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3. The sleeve 38 surrounds the insert member 36 along at least a majority of the length of the insert member 36. The sleeve 38 is rigid, and, more preferably, is a heat-resistant material that can withstand the heat and pressure generated during an injection molding process.

Preferably, the sleeve 38 is formed of a material such as aluminum, steel, carbon fiber or a strong polymeric material. The sleeve 38 is secured to the insert member 36 to prevent the insert member 36 from being blown out of the barrel 14 when shooting, and to enhance the shooting accuracy of the barrel 14 by eliminating any play between loose components. The sleeve 38 is preferably secured to the insert member 36 as follows. The inside bore of the sleeve 38 is reamed to have an inside diameter that is slightly larger, by about 0.003 inch, than the outside diameter of the insert member 36. The interior of the bore of the sleeve 38 is brushed with an adhesive, such as PLEXUSTM MA300 adhesive, sold by 3M Company. The insert member 36 is then inserted into the sleeve 38. Similarly, the insert member 36 and sleeve 38 are adhered to the breech portion 18 and the muzzle portion 30. Alternatively, the insert member 36 may be connected to the breech portion 18 and muzzle portion 30 by press fitting, by the use of threads, or other conventional mechanical fastening methods. The breech portion 18 has an interior bore within the stem 26 capable of receiving the sleeve 38, so that the sleeve 38 is inserted within a portion of the breech portion 18 and adhered to the breech portion 18. This has the advantage of providing additional reinforcement to the insert member 36 by eliminating a shear point between the breech portion 18 and sleeve 38. Similarly, the muzzle portion 30 may also have an interior bore within the stem 32 to accommodate the sleeve 38.